

# COVID-19 Advice for Pregnant Women

**Columbus Public Health recommends that women who are pregnant contact their health care providers as early as possible if they are sick.**

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) provides answers to questions about COVID-19 and pregnancy:

**Q: What is the risk to pregnant women of getting COVID-19? Is it easier for pregnant women to become ill with the disease? If they become infected, will they be sicker than other people?**

A: It is not currently known if pregnant women have a greater chance of getting sick from COVID-19 than the general public nor whether they are more likely to have serious illness as a result. Pregnant women experience changes in their bodies that may increase their risk of some infections. With viruses from the same family as COVID-19 and other viral respiratory infections such as influenza, women have had a higher risk of developing severe illness. It is always important for pregnant women to protect themselves from illnesses.

**Q: Can COVID-19 cause problems for pregnancy?**

A: It is not known at this time if COVID-19 would cause problems during pregnancy or affect the health of the baby after birth.

**Q: If a pregnant woman has COVID-19 during pregnancy, will it hurt the baby?**

A: It is currently not known at this time what if any risk is posed to infants of a pregnant woman who has COVID-19. There have been a small number of reported problems with pregnancy or delivery (e.g., preterm birth) in babies born to mothers who tested positive for COVID-19 during their pregnancy. However, it is not clear that these outcomes were related to maternal infection.

**Q: Can COVID-19 be passed from a pregnant woman to the fetus or newborn?**

A: It is still not known if a pregnant woman with COVID-19 can pass the virus that causes COVID-19 to her fetus or baby during pregnancy or delivery. No infants born to mothers with COVID-19 have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. In these cases, which are a small number, the virus was not found in samples of amniotic fluid or breastmilk.

**Q: How can pregnant women protect themselves from getting COVID-19?**

Pregnant women should do the same things as the general public to avoid infection and help stop the spread of COVID-19 by taking these actions:

- Practice social distancing which is the best and most effective tool to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- Avoid gatherings of more than 10 people.
- Cover coughs and sneezes using the elbow.
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Wash hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

**Q: Can a woman breastfeed if she has confirmed COVID-19 or is showing symptoms?**

Whether and how to start or continue breastfeeding should be determined by the mother in coordination with her family and healthcare providers. A mother with confirmed COVID-19 or who has symptoms of COVID-19 should take all possible precautions to avoid spreading the virus to her infant, including washing her hands before touching the infant and wearing a facemask, if possible, while feeding at the breast. If expressing breast milk with a manual or electric breast pump, the mother should wash her hands before touching any pump or bottle parts and follow recommendations for proper pump cleaning after each use. If possible, consider having someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant.

**COVID-19 symptoms** typically include fever ( $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) or one or more of the following:

- Cough
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Gastrointestinal symptoms

3/27/2020